



OBSERVATIONS

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
CHESTER COUNTY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY



★President: Edwin Lurcott
★Treasurer: Pete LaFrance

JULY 1997
(VOLUME 5, NO. 7)

★Vice President: Kathy Buczynski
★Secretary: William O'Hara

CCAS July Meeting & Observing Session

DATE: **Friday July 11, 1997**
RAIN DATE: Saturday July 12, 1997
TIME: 8:15 p.m. EDT
PLACE: **Brandywine Valley Assoc.**
(BVA)
LOCATION: 1760 Unionville-Wawaset Rd.
(PA Route 842)
West Chester, PA (see map)

Special Note: At the May meeting, Society members voted to combine the monthly meeting and the monthly observing session during the summer months. These events will all be held on the grounds of the Brandywine Valley Association, on PA Route 842 west of West Chester. The meeting will be held in the field where we observe, by the tower. That means that if the weather is bad both days, the July meeting and observing session is canceled.

The presentations scheduled for the June meeting had to be postponed to the July meeting. Frank Angelini will deliver part 2 of his presentation on CCD Imaging. If it's clear, this will include a demonstration "in the field". Ed Lurcott will do this month's constellation presentation on Ophiuchus.

At the Society's observing sessions, there will be help available to set up and use your telescopes. All members and the public are invited whether they have a telescope or not. Telescope owners are always glad to share the view through their 'scope.



CCAS now has a Lending Library!

Thirty books have been donated to the Chester County Astronomical Society by Professor Hugh Harber. We thank Professor Harber for his generosity. The intention is to start a library, for Society members to use.

The books cover a wide range in terms of technicality. Many of them may already be familiar to Society members, such as a copy of *Burnham's Celestial Handbook* and Ingalls' *Amateur Telescope Making*. We will now also accept book donations from other Society members who find themselves with a surplus of books. Copies of the catalog will be available at the Society meetings. To handle the circulation of our library books, we are now accepting applications for Society Librarian.



Summer Solstice Party: June 20

On Friday June 20, Ed Lurcott, Kathy Buczynski, and Roger Taylor helped out at the Summer Solstice Party held by the Brandywine Valley Association. A lot of people took advantage of the opportunity to look through a telescope. Everyone had a great time. Many thanks to Ed, Kathy, and Roger for helping out on this event.



Thank You from West Goshen

"Dear Mr. Lurcott,

On behalf of the Friends of West Goshen Parks, I would like to extend a sincere thank you to you for organizing and presenting the observing session at the community park. We certainly appreciated your expertise and your down-to-earth explanations. It was a wonderful night of learning and community spirit. We are interested in making the observing session at the park an annual event if you are interested. We'll contact you later in the year.

Thanks Again,
Holly Niemeyer
Secretary, Friends of West Goshen Park"



Summer CCAS Schedule

The August meeting and observing session will be on Friday August 1, with a cloud date of Saturday August 2, at the BVA.

Remember, if the weather is bad on both days, there will be no meeting or observing session that month.

On August 30 through September 1 (Labor Day weekend) MegaMeet VI will be held at Pulpit Rock. This event features rustic camping on the mountain, with great dark-sky observing. The Lehigh Valley Amateur Astronomers have four observatories up there that are open for viewing by participants. Pulpit Rock is not far from the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, but is approached from the other side of the mountain (outside Hamburg, north of Reading). Copies of the brochure will be available at the July and August CCAS meetings.

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CCAS Membership Survey

If you have not already done so, please fill out the survey and return it to Ed Lurcott, either by mail or by bringing it to a meeting. If you lost your copy of the form, please ask for another one at the meeting, or by phone. We haven't received many returns yet, and we'd like to give everyone a chance to express their preferences for Society programs.

Ed Lurcott
1384 Station Place
West Chester, PA 19380
Phone: 436-0387

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Constellation Flashcards by Connie Shapiro

These flashcards can be a help in learning to recognize the constellations.

Materials

"Glow-in-the-dark" paint (available at craft stores); black construction paper; white chalk; pencil; outline of constellations (from books or magazines); flashlight.

Instructions

In pencil, draw a constellation on a piece of black construction paper. With white chalk, draw lines

connecting the "stars" in the shape of the constellation. Color the "stars" with the "glow-in-the-dark" paint. Use the cards outdoors to assist you in pointing out the constellations. To use, shine the flashlight on the flashcard and study the shape of the constellation. Turn out the flashlight and hold the flashcard in the sky with the actual matching constellation as a backdrop. What you will see on the flashcard will be only the "stars" which you can now match up with the real stars in the constellation. To really impress your audience, put notes on the back of the card, listing interesting facts about the constellation, its stars, etc., etc. You could even have different "levels" of facts, that would apply to different audiences.

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July's Skies

Moon Phases

New Moon	7/04
First Quarter	7/12
Full Moon	7/19
Last Quarter	7/26

The Planets

Mercury is in the evening sky in July. Around July 22-26 may be the best time to look for Mercury, shortly after sunset. Then it will not be far from Venus, and the star Regulus (in Leo). In fact, you should be able to see all three in one binocular field of view.

Venus is low in our evening sky this month and easy to spot due to its brightness, but it will not get high enough above the horizon for good telescopic viewing. It will be the first bright "star" you see in the west after sunset. In addition to the interesting "binocular" conjunction mentioned above, Venus will move across the star cluster M44, also called the Beehive Cluster, on July 3 and 4.

Mars is easy to spot in the evening sky, a bright orange or red "star" high in the southwest at dusk.

Jupiter rises around 11 p.m. on July 1, and is rising by about 9 p.m. by the end of the month. See below for some special notes on observing Jupiter this month.

Saturn is rising in the morning sky well before the Sun, and is high in the southeast by dawn.

Uranus, in Capricornus this month, is a bit west of much-brighter Jupiter. It reaches opposition on July 29 (which means it is opposite the Sun in our sky, and rises in the east as the Sun sets in the west).

Neptune is also in Capricornus, near Uranus. It reaches opposition on July 21.

Pluto is on the border between Ophiuchus and Scorpius, and high in the south by late evening. You need a 8" or 10" telescope, good detailed star charts, and patience to find it. Dark skies help a lot, too.

Jupiter's Moons in July

In the June 1997 issue of *Sky & Telescope*, there is an article about some interesting events occurring this year for the moons of Jupiter. Every six years, the plane of the orbits of the four largest moons turns edge-on to Earth and the Sun. What this means is that from Earth we can see these moons eclipse and occult (pass in front of) each other. What you can see of an occultation, even in small telescopes and binoculars, is two moons getting ever "closer together", and "merging" as the one disappears behind the other. For an eclipse, you can see one moon's apparent brightness dip by a noticeable amount as it passes through the shadow cast by another moon. There are 2 events listed for July, that occur when Jupiter is in the nighttime skies for us in North America. The next one is on July 25. From 4:58 to 5:08 a.m. EDT, Io will eclipse Callisto, with Callisto's brightness dropping by about 54%. This eclipse will be an annular eclipse (the "ring" kind). It will occur somewhat close to the planet. This may make it tough to observe. There are more events like this in August and September.



Contributing to Observations

Contributions of articles relating to astronomy and space exploration are always welcome. If you have a computer, and an Internet connection, you can attach the file to an email message and send it to the editor at **Jim.Anderson@hbc.com**

Or mail the contribution, typed or handwritten, to:

Jim Anderson
19 Bluff Road
Thorndale, PA 19372-1104



Sky & Telescope Magazine Group Rates

Subscriptions to this excellent periodical are available through the CCAS at \$27 per year, about half the newsstand price, and also cheaper than individual subscriptions! Make out a check to the Chester County Astronomical Society, note that it's for *Sky & Telescope*, and mail to Pete LaFrance. Or you can bring it to the next Society meeting and give it to Pete there. Buying a subscription this way also gets you a 10% discount on other Sky Publishing merchandise.



Membership Renewals

Check the date printed on the address label of this issue of *Observations*; "exp." appears in front of it, just after your name. If you are due to renew, you may send your renewal check made out to our Treasurer, Pete LaFrance. Mail to:

Pete LaFrance
413 Church Rd.
Avondale, PA 19311



CCAS Membership Information

The present membership rates are as follows:

- REGULAR MEMBER**.....\$20/year
- SENIOR MEMBER**.....\$10/year
- STUDENT MEMBER**.....\$ 5/year
- JUNIOR MEMBER**.....\$ 5/year
- FAMILY MEMBER**.....\$ 30/year

For further information on membership or society activities you may call:

- President:** Edwin Lurcott (610) 436-0387
- Vice Pres:** Kathy Buczynski (610) 436-0821
- Treasurer:** Pete LaFrance (610) 268-2616
- Secretary:** William O'Hara (610) 696-1422
- Program:** Kathy Buczynski (610) 436-0821
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